The Avignon Papacy & the Western Schism

“The Babylonian Captivity of Christianity”
• 1294: Pope Nicolas IV died
• Papacy vacant
• Election of Celestine V
  – 80 year-old saintly hermit
  – Elected 12 cardinals (7 = French)
  – Abdicated the throne after 5 months
Avignon Papacy

• Election of Boniface VIII (d. 1302)
  – Annullled Celestine’s decisions
  – Imprisoned Celestine V
Avignon Papacy

• Boniface VIII (d. 1302)
  – Clash: French King Philip IV
    • Boniface claimed spiritual & temporal power
    • Philip tried to tax the Church
    • Philip imprisoned Boniface for 3 years
Avignon Papacy

• Rome is in turmoil!
• Election of Pope Benedict XI
  – Died after 8 months
  – Murdered?
Avignon Papacy

• Conclave met for 11 months
  – Pressure from King Philip IV
  – Elected Pope Clement V
Avignon Papacy

• Pope Clement V
  – Political chaos in Rome
  – Moved papacy to Avignon
  – Surrounded self with French cardinals
The Great Schism (1378–1417)

- Owning obedience to Rome
- Avignon

Areas that passed from one obedience to the other are underlined in both colors.

Scale 1:25,000,000
Avignon Papacy

• “French papacy”
  – A.k.a. “the Babylonian Captivity”
  – Next 7 popes are French
  – French king often acts like a puppet master
Avignon Papacy

- Pope Gregory XI (1370-1378) was elected
  - Moved papacy back to Rome
Western Schism

- Pope Gregory XI dies
- Conclave
- Roman mob attacks
- Finally call a council
  - Pope Urban VI (1378-1389)
Western Schism

- Pope Urban VI (1378-1389)
  - Zealous
  - Hoped to cleanse the Church
- Official election?
Western Schism

• Election of Clement VII (1378-1394)
  – Antipope

• Thus begins the Western Schism
  – Excommunication
  – Successors
The Great Schism (1378-1417)

- Owing obedience to Rome
- "Avignon"

Areas that passed from one obedience to the other are underlined in both colors.

K. = Kingdom.

Scale 1:250000000

Miles

Atlantic Ocean

K.of Castile and Leon
K.of Aragon

Rhodes (Knights of St. John)

Minor

K.of Cyprus

Granada

Mediterranean Sea
Western Schism

- 1408: Popes Gregory XII & Benedict XIII
- Council of Pisa (1409)
  - Deposed both popes
  - Elected Alexander V as the Pope
- 3 popes!
Western Schism

• Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund decided to call an ecumenical council
• Council of Constance (1417)
Western Schism

• Council of Constance (1417)
  – Assembly of nations: France, England, Germany, Italy, Spain, & cardinals
  – Declared in charge
  – Gregory XII abdicated
  – Benedict XIII lost support
  – Elected Martin V (papacy: 1417-1431)
The End
of the
Western Schism